



May 16, 2018

Dear Chairman Vaupel,

I would like to take this opportunity to express the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association's (MEMSPA) strong support for HB 5241, Rep. VanSingel's pre-kindergarten oral assessment legislation.

Michigan's elementary and middle school principals know how important a child's health is to their ability to learn, and they recognize the critical interconnection between oral health and general health. In fact, MEMSPA is part of a unique statewide collaborative focused on improving student health and academic achievement through a whole child approach.

Sadly tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease in America. In Michigan, one in four third-graders have untreated dental disease – and the key here is “untreated”. Everyday principals across our state have students suffering from painful dental issues and those students are losing out on valuable learning opportunities as a result. Even our best teachers are challenged to successfully educate children who are distracted from learning due to physical pain or worse children who regularly miss school because of it.

That is why MEMSPA is supporting House Bill 5241, a proactive and common-sense policy that identifies children in need of oral health care and directs them to the treatment necessary to be healthy and ready to learn.

We are grateful for this legislation that will improve the health status and learning preparedness of our young school children and strongly urge the committee's passage of House Bill 5241.

Sincerely,

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